

Law 328-001 | Trial Advocacy | Spring 2025 | 2 credits
Professor(s): Judge Rossie D. Alston, Jr. & Judge William Jarvis
Monday 4:00 – 6:00 pm EST | Final Exam: N/A

Reading(s):

*The major reading resources will be:

--*Trial Advocacy in a Nutshell* – 6th Edition

--*The Journal of the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association*, Volume 22, Number 4, 2011, can be purchased directly from the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association (VTLA) at:
<https://www.vtla.com/index.cfm?pg=store&sa=ViewDetails&ItemID=12933&cat=2531>

--*The Art and Science of Mastering the Jury Trial* by Judge Samuel Johnson and Irv Cantor

Communication(s):

Judge Rossie D. Alston, Jr. (ralstonj@gmu.edu)

Judge William Jarvis (wjarvis@gmu.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal for this course is for students to learn the basic legal rules applicable to being a successful courtroom litigator. Students will also be exposed (where circumstances permit) to interactive exercises in all aspects of the trial of a criminal and civil case.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to conduct a successful voir dire, present an opening statement and closing argument, understand and conduct a thorough direct examination, cross-examination, and be able to qualify an expert witness. Students will also gain an enhanced understanding of the Rules of Evidence based on the text and intent behind the rules.

GRADING & PARTICIPATION

Class attendance and participation (by virtue of either cold calling or volunteering) will also be taken into account in calculating a student's ability to successfully pass this course. As this class is very interactive, students will be expected to have prepared for class exercises and the role-playing exercises necessary to become effective courtroom advocates.

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COURSE SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT
01/27/25	Introduction, Trials - Overview Objections	<i>*Nutshell pages 344-447; Class Overview</i>
02/03/25	Use of Exhibits	<i>Class Exercises</i>
02/10/25	Jury Selection and Voir Dire	<i>*The Journal of the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association, Volume 22 Number 4, 2011</i>
02/17/25	Lecture: Direct and Cross Examination	<i>The Journal of the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association, Volume 22 Number 4, 2011</i>
02/24/25	Direct and Cross Examination II	<i>Nutshell pages 139- 197</i>
03/17/25	Direct and Cross Examination III	<i>Nutshell pages 240- 280</i>
03/24/25	Evidence	Evidence – Itell-materials to be provided by instructors
03/31/25	Impeachment	<i>Nutshell pages 290-333</i>
04/07/25	Impeachment, Redirect Motions in Limine	<i>Nutshell pages 335-343</i>
04/14/25	Experts, Arguing Legal Positions	<i>Nutshell pages 449-480</i>
04/21/25	Opening Statements (All Motions in Limine to be filed) Trial Preparation	<i>The Journal of the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association, Volume 22 Number 4, 2011 Nutshell pages 92-135</i>
04/24/25 (Thursday)	Closing Arguments (All Oppositions to Motions in Limine to be filed)	<i>Nutshell pages 485-511</i>
Week of 05/01/25	Trials – Format, Location and mode TBD	<i>*The Art and Science of Mastering the Jury Trial</i>